

## Water story for the Hopland Band Of Pomo Indians

The Hopland Tribes shortage of safe drinking water is the greatest issue my Tribe has to face. Finding a sustainable source of potable drinking water should be high on the Tribes priority list but over the years there has been little done to deal with this problem. We own and operate a drinking water well which produce's drinking water but its yield is not enough to keep our water storage tanks full. We are a tribe that depends on water trucked in from the town of Hopland which gets its potable water from a well along the Russian River. The truck loads of water average 5 times per-day, 5 days of the week. The cost of these water trucks is quite expensive but our small Casino we operate pays 70% of the tab and the customers hooked to the water distribution system pay the other 30% of the trucking bill. If the Casino was not in operation the Hopland Reservation would be very different place. I am a tribal member, resident, and employee of the Hopland Tribe and this is our water story.

The state of our water resources has been an on going issue for the residents of the Hopland Tribe for as long as I can remember. Surface water and limited ground water sources historically were used to sustain the Hopland Tribe. The 2 sources of surface water were always safe and healthy for Tribal members to drink but regulatory agencies deemed them unsafe to drink so the Hopland Tribe abandon them both as drinking water sources. I believe that more should have been done by the Hopland Tribe to protect these sources of drinking water for future use.

The passage of the 1989 Surface Water Treatment Rule was created to protect us from containments in our drinking water but it certainly hurt the Hopland Tribe. The price tag to treat surface drinking water was a cost that the Tribal residents could not afford. So we abandon our natural spring and infiltration gallery and relayed on the Indian Health Service to find our Tribe a reliable drinking water source. There have been at least 12 wells drilled on the Hopland Reservation. Only 1 well drilled in 1997 is still in use today. We did drill a well in 2001 which produced a sustainable yield of potable water which could support the entire Hopland Reservation but the presents of high levels of arsenic, iron and manganese were detected in this well. The Tribe could not afford to treat this source of drinking water so this well was abandon.

### Pipe-line Project.

In 2003 the Hopland Tribe was given granted money to conduct a feasibility study for construction of a pipe line from the town of Hopland to Hopland Reservation. Now 7 years later the Pipe-line project is 98% complete. The issues of water rights, out of county water users, and agriculture use has presented for reaching legal issues that seem to have no end. Currently the Hopland Tribe depend 100% on water purchased from the town of Hopland. Our treatment facility and equipment to operate our well has become out dated and is not longer in use. Locating replacement parts for our drinking water system has become quite difficult for the operators and administration staff which brings our treatment facility to non-operational status.

Recently we submitted a Sanitary Deficiency Systems letter to the Indian Health Service for the consideration of assistance for our drinking water well and equipment. A site visit was conducted by IHS staff and it was agreed that the Hopland Tribe was in an emergency status.

**It seem as though we might be eligible for assistance from the Indian Health Service. This would greatly improve our drinking water resources and improve the capacity to produce safe drinking water for the Hopland Tribe.**

**Thank you,**

**Benjamin R Henthorne III**